

Saturday

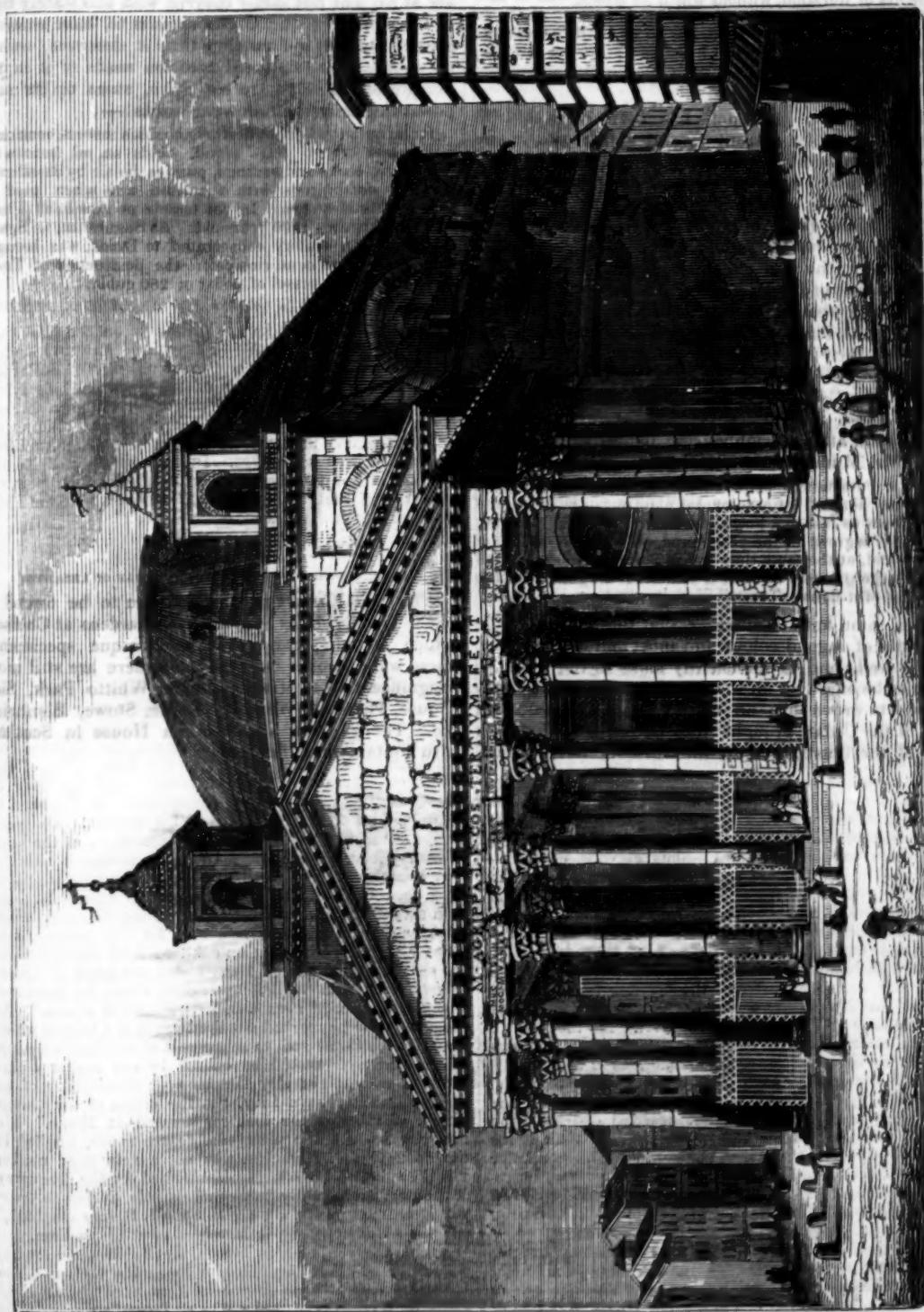


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THE PANTHEON, AT ROME.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF ROME

PART THE FIFTH.

THE CAPITOLINE HILL.

"To most persons," says Dr. Burton, "the Capitoline Hill will be even more interesting than the Palatine. The earliest history of Rome makes us acquainted with the latter, but the Capitol is conspicuous through every stage of its grandeur." The learned writer might have extended our interest in it over a still wider field; in the Rome of the middle ages, the Capitol plays as important a part, comparatively speaking, as it played in the Rome of antiquity. Not only "the Sabines, the Gauls, the republicans, the imperialists," but also "the citizens of papal Rome," to use the words of Sir John Hobhouse, "have all contended for dominion on the same narrow spot."

This is the smallest of the seven hills; its circuit at the base is not a mile. In its form it resembles, roughly speaking, a flat ellipse, whose greater diameter is equal to two of its shorter diameters; or in other words, it resembles an oval, half as broad as it is long. The general direction of its length is nearly north and south; the distance from the northern to the southern extremity along the top is about thirteen hundred feet, and the breadth of the hill at the middle of its length, about half as many. The top of the hill exhibits a peculiar conformation; instead of presenting one level surface, it rises at the two extremities into two summits, between which lies the rest of the hill, sunk a little lower, like a small plain or valley. This plain was called by the ancient Romans the *Intermontium*,—or "Between-Mounts," as we may say; it is still called *Intermontio* at the present day. If we consider the *Intermontium* as itself a square hill, and the two summits as two higher semicircular hills joined on to its northern and southern sides respectively, we shall have a rough notion of the Capitoline mount, such as it would appear in its natural state.

We have already described the Palatine as forming a sort of centre round which the other six hills are arranged. Among these six the Capitol finds its place on the north-west of this centre; or, in other words, the Capitol has the Palatine on its south-east. On its north-east it has the Quirinal,—the only hill besides the Palatine which approaches at all near to it. On the south-west it has the Tiber, just where that river makes a bend and alters its course from the south-east to the south-west. To the west and the north it opens directly upon the large plain of the Campus Martius, in which the great bulk of the modern city is built. From this description the reader will understand that while the circuit of Rome was confined to its seven hills, the Capitol was just at the western edge of the city; in fact, the western wall of the city passed along the whole of the western side of the hill from its northern to its southern extremity. The Campus Martius, which lay to the west of the Capitol, was thus outside of the city; in fact, it continued for a long while to be an open field in which the consuls and other magistrates were elected, and to which the citizens resorted as a suburban place of exercise and amusement. In process of time it became covered with buildings; and when at length it was enclosed within the walls by Aurelian, the Capitol, instead of, as formerly, having the city wholly upon its east, had it partly upon the east and partly upon the west. At the present day the eastern half of Aurelian's city is nearly uninhabited; so that now instead of having, as at first it had, the whole city upon its east, or as it afterwards had, a part of the city upon its east and a part upon its west, the Capitol has scarcely anything but deserted districts upon its east, and nearly the whole of the reduced bulk of the inhabited city upon its west. These changes in the relative position of the Capitol towards the bulk of the city, consequent upon the rise and decline of Rome should be clearly understood by a reader wishing to become acquainted even slightly with its topography.

Before the foundation of Rome, this hill is said to have been called *Saturnia*, or *Mons Saturnius*; and there seems to have been a tradition among the Romans, that a town was built upon it before the settlement of Evander on the Palatine. Virgil has availed himself of this tradition, and his fancy has left us a picture in the time of *Aeneas*, artfully adapted as usual to the vanity of his countrymen,

and even thus early investing the hill with that peculiar sanctity which constantly attached to it in the eyes of the Romans throughout the whole period of their greatness. When Evander is visited by the Trojan prince, he conducts his guest over the site of the future city, and points out the memorable localities,—the cave of Cæsus,—the spot on which afterwards stood the Carmental Gate,—the grove of the Asylum,—the Lupercal:—

Thence to the steep Tarpeian rock he leads,
Now roofed with gold; then thatched with homely reeds.
A reverent fear (such superstition reigns
Among the rude) e'en then possessed the swains,
Some God they knew, what God they could not tell,
Did there amidst the sacred horror dwell.
Th' Arcadians thought him Jove; and said they saw
The mighty thund'rer with majestic awe,
Who shook his shield and dealt his bolts around,
And scattered tempests on the teeming ground.
Then saw two heaps of ruins; once they stood
Two stately towns on either side the flood.
Saturnia and Janicula's remains;
And either place the founder's name retains.

THE CAPITOL OF THE MONARCHY AND THE REPUBLIC.

WHEN Romulus had founded his city on the Palatine Hill, and was desirous of attracting inhabitants to it, one of the measures to which he resorted was that of declaring a part of the *Intermontium* of the opposite hill, lying between two little groves of oak-trees, to be a sacred *Asylum* or place of refuge for criminals, and others who had been forced to flee from neighbouring communities, and even for runaway slaves. In the after-ages of Rome, the space which this sanctuary occupied was long pointed out as one of the curious localities of the Capitoline Hill. In Virgil's poem Evander shows *Aeneas*

..... the forest which in after times,
Fierce Romulus for perpetrated crimes,
A sacred refuge made.

Juvenal, in one of his satires, after allowing that the possession of a noble name is honourable so long as the possessor does not disgrace it by his vices, chastises the pride of birth by thus addressing his imaginary auditor:—

And yet how high so'er thy pride may trace
The long-forgotten founders of thy race,
Still must the search with that *Asylum* end,
From whose polluted source we all descend.

In the war which broke out between the Sabines and the Romans, three Latin towns on the Anio, allies of the former, were successively overpowered; and the king of one of them was slain in an engagement, by the hand of Romulus himself, and stripped of his armour. The conqueror returning to his infant city entered it, at the head of his rejoicing soldiers; and this rude procession was the first beginning of those splendid triumphs with which in after ages the Romans celebrated their conquests. He then ascended the Capitoline Hill, bearing the spoils of his slain enemy on a frame fashioned for the purpose, and there hanging them upon an oak-tree held sacred among the shepherds, he offered them under the name of *Spolia Opima*, or "Rich Spoils," to Jupiter, whom he honoured with the epithet of *Feretrius*, or "Bearer of Spoils." At the same time he marked out the bounds of a temple which he dedicated to the god, to be the seat of the *Spolia Opima*, which thereafter should be offered by any leader of the Romans who might slay the king or commander of an enemy. "This," says Livy, "is the origin of the temple which, of all, was the first consecrated at Rome." He remarks also that the promise of future spoils, implied in the dedication of Romulus, was not a vain one; neither was the value of the offering diminished by the frequency of the repetition. Only "twice afterwards, during so many years, so many wars, were the *Spolia Opima* obtained; and the number was never increased after Livy's time."

Very shortly after this event, the Sabines set out to attack Rome. The Capitoline, or Saturnian Hill, as it was still called, seemed upon this occasion to have first assumed the appearance of a fortress; its steep rocky sides rendered it naturally a place of strength, and for its further security it was now encompassed with a ditch and palisade. Into this strong hold Romulus threw a garrison; and here too

he caused the husbandmen to retire with their flocks in the night. The Sabines were saved the trouble of forcing their defences; for, according to the old story, they gained possession more easily through the treachery of Tarpeia, the daughter of the Roman commander. It appears that having gone without the walls to draw water, the damsel was seized by the Sabines; when dazzled by their ornaments of gold, she agreed, on consideration of receiving the bracelets which they wore on their left arms, to open to them a gate of the fortress by night. She fulfilled her promise and claimed her reward; the Sabines threw their shields upon her, their king himself setting the example, and she was crushed beneath the ponderous load. She was buried where she fell, and for many ages yearly libations were poured on her tomb; and the memory of her crime was vividly preserved among the Romans of succeeding generations, by the association of the name of Tarpeia with the rock from which traitors were hurled in after-ages. Yet it was a subject of dispute among the ancient historians themselves, whether she was really a traitress to her country; for, according to another story, it was her object to lure the Sabines within the fortress, that they might encounter a certain destruction, and although her scheme was unsuccessful through the neglect of her countrymen, it was discovered by the enemy, and by them punished with the forfeiture of her life. It is said that, after her death, the whole hill exchanged the name of Saturnius for *Tarpeius*, which it retained, until it acquired the more glorious and lasting appellation of *Capitolinus*.

When peace ensued between the Romans and the Sabines, and the two nations became united into one people, the Sabines settled upon the Saturnian, or Tarpeian Hill. The *arx*, or citadel of Rome, seems to have been afterwards formed upon this hill; it originally occupied the southern summit, or that approaching towards the Tiber, but as the entire mount was afterwards enclosed by walls and fortified, the appellation of *arx* became applied indiscriminately to the whole. According to Sir William Gell, the fortress was supplied with water by a deep well at the foot of the rock, into which buckets were lowered through an artificial groove or channel, for the passage of which the face of the precipice was cut into a perpendicular. This channel must have been protected by a wall to prevent an enemy from possessing himself of the well. "No labour," says that writer, "was saved by the excavation of the well at the foot of the cliff instead of on the summit, for Mr. Laing Meason found a gallery or passage cut in the solid rock, for the purpose of descending from the top towards the water; it was, therefore, from some superstition that the well was constructed beyond the walls of the fortress, which, as we have before remarked, was the case almost universally."

The fourth successor of Romulus, Tarquinus, surnamed *Priscus*, or the Elder, has the merit of founding the great temple which formed the chief ornament of this hill. That monarch, when engaged in a war with the Sabines, vowed that if he came off victorious, he would build a temple to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The Sabines were defeated, and, in fulfilment of his vow, Tarquinus prepared a site for the building. He selected one of the summits of the Tarpeian Hill, and rendered it fit for his purpose by raising up a lofty wall round its rugged peak, and filling up the hollow thus made. He died before he could carry the work further; and the full accomplishment of his vow was reserved for his son Tarquinus Superbus, or the Proud, the seventh and last king of Rome, who engaged Etrurian workmen for the task, and employed in it the Romans' share of the booty of Suessa Pometia, a city of the Volsci, which, in conjunction with his Latin allies, he had taken and destroyed. The foundation of the temple was, of course, accompanied with remarkable prodigies. It appears that the ground chosen was already occupied by several altars and chapels, which had been consecrated by the Sabines; and the augurs were directed to ascertain if the deities to whom these were sacred would yield their place to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The augurs were consulted, and allowed the removal of all except the shrines of *Terminus* and *Juventus*, the gods of "Boundaries" and "Youth" respectively; these deities stoutly refused to stir, and their obstinate tenacity was received as a happy omen that the boundaries of the Roman land should never recede, and that the state should be forever young. A second prodigy still more remarkable, as indicating the future magnitude of the Roman dominion, followed upon digging for the foundations. A human head

with the face entire, "as of one newly slain," presented itself to the workmen. Tarquinus stopped the progress of the works, and called in the soothsayers; the meaning of the prodigy lay too deeply hidden for the native professors of the art, and reference was had to their Etruscan brethren. By these it was interpreted as an omen that the spot should be the "citadel of empire and the head of things." The temple—or the building—or both, received accordingly the name of *Capitolium*, from the Latin word *Caput*, signifying a head; and it was said to be dedicated to Jupiter *Capitoline*. The hill also exchanged the appellation of Tarpeius for that of *Mons Capitolinus*, or the Capitoline Mount. At a subsequent period the name of the temple, and of the summit on which it stood, was extended to the whole hill; and *Capitolium* was applied indifferently to all three, just as the *arx* was applied to the other summit and the whole hill also. This confusion of names in the ancient writers is a source of much annoyance to antiquaries.

From whence the story of the head arose, as Dr. Burton observes, "it is impossible to discover; but the invention of the prophecy was at least politic: and it is singular how early the Romans seem to have talked of the extended empire which their descendants were one day to hold. It may, however, be objected, that several expressions which Livy puts into the mouths of his speakers, were purposely used by him without reference to the feelings of those times."

Encouraged by these omens, Tarquinus proceeded on a scale of greater magnificence; so that as Livy says, "the booty of Pometia, which had been destined to carry the work to its summit, scarcely sufficed for the foundations." The people were forced to contribute their labour, receiving from the king a scanty measure of food in exchange, and we are told that they felt little aggrieved at having to build the temples of their gods with their own hands, though they worked unwillingly when compelled by the same monarch to complete the *Circus Maximus*, and the Great Sewers of the city. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote in the time of Augustus, gives us the following description of the temple as it stood in his days; the edifice which he describes is not that which Tarquin built, but he himself tells us in what respects it differed. "It rested upon a lofty foundation; its circuit was eight hundred feet, and each of its sides very nearly two hundred; as to the small difference between them, one would find the excess of the length over the breadth, to be scarcely fifty full feet. For it is upon the very same foundations that, after its burning, it was rebuilt in the time of our fathers, differing only in the greater costliness of the materials from the old structure. The front, looking towards the south, has a triple row of pillars; the sides a double row. Within it are three parallel shrines, having common sides; the middle one is that of Jupiter; on the one hand is that of Juno, and on the other that of Minerva, all covered by one roof."

THE CAPITOL OF THE REPUBLIC.

TARQUINUS was driven from Rome before the dedication of the temple which he had built; the performance of that ceremony was reserved for the first or third year of the infant republic. The two consuls, Valerius and Horatius, drew lots for the honourable task; it fell to the latter, and the friends of his rival, (who was himself absent, conducting a war,) feeling much aggrieved thereat, strove by all means to prevent Valerius from fulfilling it. Their last resource was to interrupt him while in the very act of addressing his prayer to the gods, with the "foul tidings," that his son was dead. "Whether it was," says Livy, "that he did not believe the fact, or that the strength of his mind was so great, is not recorded as certain, nor to be easily understood; but, nothing moved from his purpose, further than to order the dead body to be carried out for burial, he kept his station, went through the prayer and dedicated the temple."

The temple thus dedicated, endured upwards of four hundred years,—or throughout the greater part of the republican period of Rome. We have no direct description of the building in detail; but from the scattered references in the pages of ancient writers, we may suppose, that though majestic from its size, it had very little of that magnificence which is derived from richness of materials and splendour of decoration. About three hundred years before the Christian era, it was adorned with brazen thresholds, the produce of fines levied upon some unfortunate usurers—a class of men, whose involuntary contributions to the public works of ancient Rome are more

than once recorded by Livy, in winding up the events of a year. At the same time, a statue of Jupiter was placed on the summit, with a chariot drawn by four horses; it was, probably, of bronze, though, afterwards, a gilt one was placed there. More than a century afterwards, the pillars of the building were "made smooth and plastered," by the Censor *Æmilius Lepidus*; and from this it is inferred, that their material was brick, or at least, that it was not stone. After the fall of Carthage, when the age of Roman luxury may be said to have commenced, the Capitol first became entitled to that epithet of "golden," which was afterwards so constantly associated with its name; for in the year 142 B.C., the timber roof was gilt on the interior. It was then, too, that pavement of mosaic was laid down.

We frequently read of valuable offerings being deposited in this temple. When the Dictator Camillus triumphed, in the year 388 B.C., so many captives were led before his chariot, that a portion of the money resulting from their sale, was expended in three golden cups, which were placed in the shrine of Jupiter, before the feet of Juno. Nine years afterwards, Titus Quintius Cincinnatus, who was then dictator (not the celebrated dictator of that name), having reduced Praeneste and its eight subject towns, bore the enemy's standard in his triumph, and deposited it in the Capitol. It was consecrated between the shrines of Jupiter and Minerva, and underneath it was fixed an inscription, "in nearly these words," as Livy says, "'Jupiter and all the gods granted that Titus Quintius, dictator, should take nine towns.'" The shield of the Carthaginian general, Asdrubal, which formed a part of the booty acquired by the Romans, when they stormed his camp in Spain, during the second Punic war, was another of the trophies which decorated the Capitol; it was of silver, weighing one hundred and thirty-eight pounds, and was suspended over the door of the temple. There seem to have been a great many of these trophies affixed to the columns of the building; for we are told, that the same censor, Lepidus, who had the pillars themselves "made smooth and plastered," in the year 181 B.C., "removed from them the shields and the military standards of every kind, as seeming unsuitably placed against them." On the top of the temple, besides the statue of Jupiter already mentioned, there was a figure of the god "Summanus," in a car drawn by four horses, all of baked clay; the deity mentioned under this name is supposed to be Pluto, but Ovid himself was doubtful to whom it really belonged.

The statue of Jupiter which stood within this temple, was, of course, an object of interest. According to Pliny, it was originally of baked clay, and, as some readings have it, painted red.

Immortal Jove, framed by a potter's hand,
Did in a narrow wooden temple stand.

So says Ovid, writing under Augustus, and referring to former times. To the same effect may be adduced the authority of the satirist Juvenal, who, when lamenting the aversion of the gods from the age of vice and splendour, in which he lived, contrasts it with the signal favour shown to the more humble and virtuous generations which preceded,—alluding, in particular, to the preservation of the Capitol from the Gauls.

Then, then the majesty of temples showed
More glorious, honoured with a present god;
Then solemn sounds heard from the sacred walls
At midnight's solemn hour, told of the Gauls
Advancing from the main; while prompt to save,
Stood Jove, the prophet of the signs he gave.
Yet, when he thus revealed the will of fate,
And watched attentive o'er the Latian state,
His shrine, his statue, rose of humble mould,
Of artless form, and unprofaned with gold.

The expression used by both these writers, literally denotes an image "made of clay or earth." The first "profanation" with gold, seems to have been about 180 years after the repulse of the Gauls, when a thunderbolt of that metal, weighing fifty pounds, was presented to the deity; this was one of the measures resorted to at the instance of the keepers of the Sibylline books, to appease the wrath which the gods were supposed to have evinced by certain prodigies.

This temple, with all the treasures which it contained, was burnt down in the year 84 B.C., during the civil war of Marius and Sylla. It was rebuilt by Sylla, upon the same foundations, but with more costly materials; the pillars were of a variegated marble, and were brought from the temple of Jupiter Olympius at Athens. "The man who had so deeply imbrued his hands in his country's

blood," says Mr. Burton, "was not permitted to consecrate the national sanctuary. Sylla died before the dedication, and that ceremony was performed by Catulus, whose name was inscribed upon it." It was Catulus, too, who had the bronze tiles upon the roof gilt,—an act for which he was censured by some of his contemporaries, as one of extravagance. It is of this second edifice that Dionysius speaks in the description already quoted.

About the same time that the temple was restored, Catulus erected upon the Intermontium of the Capitoline Hill, in the part overlooking the Forum, the great *Tabularium*, a record-office, and its massive substructions, of both of which some portions are still to be seen.

The Sibylline books were preserved in the temple, in a stone chest, under ground. The story of them is variously told. According to one version, a strange woman presented herself before Tarquin, bearing nine books, for which she demanded certain price, very great. The king refused to give it. The woman accordingly departed, burnt three of the books, and returning, demanded the same price for the six which remained. The king still refused to give it, and even ridiculed her as a senseless old woman; she a second time departed and burnt three; then again returning, demanded the same price for the three which were left. Surprised at this strange proceeding, Tarquin consulted the augurs, who declared their regret at the loss of the books which had been burnt, and advised the king to buy the three which remained at the price demanded. He did so, and the woman having delivered up the books, with an injunction that they should be carefully preserved, departed, and was never afterwards seen. Tarquin committed them to the care of two men of illustrious birth, who bore the title of *Decemviri* or *Decemvirs*; one of whom he is said to have punished for being unfaithful to his trust, by ordering him to be sewn up alive in a sack, and cast into the sea,—the punishment afterwards inflicted on parricides. The number of guardians was afterwards increased to ten, of whom five were patricians, and five plebeians; and afterwards to fifteen and sixteen. The secrecy in which their contents were wrapped, was never violated except by a decree of the senate, in seasons of danger and distress. These books were burnt when the first Capitol was destroyed by fire.

THE CAPITOL OF THE EMPIRE.

The second temple of Jupiter was destined to stand a much shorter time than its predecessor. It was burnt in the reign of the "beastly Vitellius," during the commotion which preceded his downfall and murder. Of this calamity Tacitus has left us an eloquent description.

Vespasian, the successor of Vitellius, rebuilt the temple, and is recorded to have begun the work by labouring at it with his own hands. This third edifice was burnt in the reign of Titus. The Emperor Domitian restored it; he adorned it with columns of Pentelic marble brought from Athens, but, according to Plutarch, by smoothing and polishing them too much, he injured their proportions, and made them too slender. He followed the example of Catulus in gilding the outside of the roof, but the profusion of the emperor far exceeded that of the republican consul; twelve thousand talents, or about £2,400,000 of our money, are said to have been expended by him in that part of the building alone. The extravagance of Domitian in this and other public works, led to that exceeding severity which accompanied the exaction of the capitulation-tax from the Jewish people. It was the opinion of a contemporary of the emperor, that if he were to reclaim from the gods the sums which he had expended upon them, even Jupiter himself, though he were to hold a general auction in Olympus, would be unable to pay a twelfth of his debts, or, as we should say, 1s. 8d. in the pound.

If Caesar all thou to the powers hast lent,
Thou shouldest reclaim, a creditor content,
Should a fair auction vend Olympus' hall,
And the just gods be fain to sell their all;
The bankrupt Atlas not a twelfth could sound:—
Who bade the Sire of Gods with man compound?
For Capitolian fane what to the chief?
What can he pay for the Tarpeian leaf?
What for her double towers the Thunderer's queen?
Pallas I pass, thy manager serene.
Alcides why, or Phœbus, should I name
Or the twin Lacons, of fraternal fame?
Or the substructure (who can sum the whole!)
Of Flavian temples to the Latian pole?
Augustus, pious, then, and patient stay:
The chest of Jove possesses not to pay.

This was the fourth and last temple erected to the Capitoline Jove; it fell only with the empire. Its magnificence naturally exceeded that of all its predecessors. A Latin poet of the fourth century mentions its carved doors, and the giants and winged figures which decorated its summit. Of the statue of Jupiter which stood in this edifice little is recorded. That in the second temple was wholly of gold, as we learn from Pliny; but he says that it did not exist in his time, having been destroyed by the fire. It is a disputed question whether the statue in the later temple was of gold, or merely of bronze, gilt. "If the tradition be true," says Dr. Burton, "that St. Leo, who was Pope from 440 to 461, had the statue of St. Peter made out of the bronze of Jupiter Capitolinus, the question is decided." The statue here mentioned is that now in the great church of St. Peter; we shall speak of it when we describe that edifice.

Under the emperors, the Capitoline Hill must have lost all appearance of a fortress. From the time of Domitian, "the triumphs and studies of peace," to use the words of Sir John Hobhouse, "were pursued amidst the roofs of victory. Poets were crowned with oaken leaves, libraries were collected, schools opened, and professors taught rhetoric from the reign of Hadrian to that of Theodosius. . . . Three Latin rhetoricians, five Greek sophists, ten Latin and ten Greek grammarians, formed a respectable university."

The great temple of the Capitoline Jove was not the only temple which stood on the hill; nor were the temples the only edifices. It is very difficult for us to form an idea of the general appearance which it presented, and of the effect which it must have produced. We know very little of the buildings themselves which stood there, or of the manner in which they were arranged; the hill itself, too, is undoubtedly much altered, and has lost much of its former imposing aspect, from the circumstance of the sides having become less abrupt, and its height having been lessened by the raising of the ground at its base. Still from our knowledge of the site, and from the testimony of ancient writers, we can readily conceive that it must have afforded a sight of great magnificence. "You fix your eye," says the author of *Letters of an Architect*, "on the bold elevation of the Capitol, and figure to yourself what it must have appeared, unincumbered with the rubbish of modern buildings, when all its temples were entire, each surrounded by stately colonnades, and the whole crowned with the splendid fane of Jupiter Capitolinus. There were probably many incon siderable temples in Rome, but here was a collection of fine ones; many might have been in bad taste, but individual defects were lost in the splendour of the whole display. Besides, the simple form of the ancient temple precluded such extravagances as are found in modern architecture; and the form of the ground gave to such a collection its full effect."

The first recorded plunderer of the Capitol was Stilicho, the great general of the western empire under Honorius; by him the plates of gold were carried off from the great doors of the temple. The next is Genseric, under whom Rome was sacked by the Vandals in 455; he took away half of the tiles from the roof, which were of bronze gilt. The other half seems to have fallen a prey to Theodoric who reigned as Gothic king of Italy, from 493 to 526; yet in his time, as we learn from his minister Cassiodorus, "the ascent to the high Capitol furnished a sight surpassing all that the imagination could conceive." How long it retained this splendour is unknown; it is probable that the robbery of the Emperor Constans, who in 653 carried off all the bronze statues and ornaments that he could find in Rome, extended to the Capitol. But the most potent cause of its decay was the spread of Christianity, which deprived the Pagan temples of their votaries, and often occasioned the destruction of the edifices themselves. St. Jerome, as early as about the year 400, thus notices the operation of this cause: "The golden Capitol is foul from neglect; all the temples of Rome are covered with dust and cobwebs. The city is moved from its very foundations, and the overflowing people rush before the half-destroyed shrines to the tombs of the martyrs." The last trace, and that a very doubtful one, of the great temple, is lost in the ninth century.

THE CAPITOL IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

In the dark period of the middle ages, the ancient metropolis of the world was the theatre of frequent and bloody conflicts. The close of the eighth century witnessed the

final separation of the Greek from the Latin Church, and the transfer of the allegiance of the Romans from the successors of Constantine to a king of the Franks,—the restorer of the empire of the West. Long before that event, the peace of the city had been often disturbed, by tumults arising from the election of the popes; soon after it, the disturbances became more frequent and more serious. The dominion which Charlemagne had acquired, endured but a short while; and scarcely one hundred and fifty years after he himself had been crowned with acclamation in the church of St. Peter, his successor, the great Otho, seeking the same honours on the same spot, "commanded his sword-bearer not to stir from his person, lest he should be assaulted and murdered at the foot of the altar." As the authority of these emperors declined, the election of the popes came to rest more completely with the Romans themselves; and an ample field was thus furnished for the display of licentiousness and lawless violence. The competitor who had been excluded by the cardinals, appealed to the passions of the multitude; and the Roman pontiffs of the ninth and tenth centuries were insulted, imprisoned, and sometimes murdered, by their subjects. These commotions were nurtured by the rival ambition of powerful families; and the perpetual conflicts of the barons among themselves, or of the barons with the people, were more permanently injurious to Rome than the occasional assaults of foreign invaders.

It is from the commencement of the tenth century, when the power of the emperors declined, that we are to date this licentiousness of private war; from that time till the commencement of the fifteenth century,—a dark period of five hundred years,—the city was constantly afflicted with the sanguinary quarrels of the nobles and the people, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the Colonna and Orsini. "At such a time, when every quarrel was decided by the sword, and none could trust their lives or properties to the importance of law; the powerful citizens were armed for safety or offence against the domestic enemies whom they feared or hated." The turbulent barons usurped the prerogative of fortifying their houses, and erecting strong towers, that were capable of resisting a sudden attack; the very churches themselves became encompassed with bulwarks, and the military engines on the roof of St. Peter's were, at times, the terror of the Vatican. In the reign of the Great Otho, it had been established as a maxim of public jurisprudence, that although the prince who was elected in the German diet acquired from that moment the subject kingdoms of Italy and Rome, yet he might not legally assume the titles of emperor and Augustus, till he had received the crown from the Roman pontiff. So late as the middle of the fifteenth century, the successors of Charlemagne and Otho were content with the humble names of kings of Germany and Italy, till they had gone through the ceremony of a coronation on the banks of the Tiber. "They descended from the Alps at the head of their barbarians, who were strangers and enemies to the country; and their transient visit was a scene of tumult and bloodshed." In the beginning of the fourteenth century, "the coronation of the emperor, Henry the Seventh," says Sir John Hobhouse, "was attended with battles fought in every quarter of the city, from the Vatican to the Lateran; and while he received the ensigns of universal empire in the latter church, his rival John, the brother of Robert of Naples, was in possession of the fortress (the church) of St. Peter's, and of several other posts in the heart of Rome. The fall of houses, the fire, the slaughter, the ringing of the bells from all the churches, the shouts of the combatants, and the clanging of arms, the Roman people rushing together from all quarters of the Capitol,—this universal uproar was the strange but not unusual prelude to the coronation of a Caesar."

We have thus glanced at the state of Rome in the middle ages, that the reader may the better understand the conspicuous part which the Capitol often played, in the disorders of that wild and gloomy period. After the last mention of this "citadel of the earth," in the records of ancient history, it does not appear for ages; but it had not entirely lost its former use, "if it be true that the antipope John was thrown from the Tarpeian rock at the end of the tenth century." In the next hundred years we find it a stronghold of the Corsi family. The ruinous practice of fortifying the monuments of antiquity had already been established among the turbulent barons, and the Pantheon, the Coliseum, the Mole of Hadrian, and the Baths of Constantine, had been converted with others into the fortresses

of rival factions. In the year 1084, the Corsi were dispossessed of the Capitol by the emperor, Henry the Fourth, who entered the city in support of the antipope, Clement the Third, and fixed his residence on that hill, "as the lawful successor of Augustus and Charlemagne." His stay was but short; he fled the same year on the approach of the renowned Robert Guiscard, the Norman duke of Apulia, and by this staunch adherent to the cause of Pope Gregory the Seventh, whatever remained of the fortress was levelled with the ground. In less than forty years it seems to have been again occupied as a place of strength; for we read in 1118 of the people mounting the Capitol, to the rescue of their pope, Gelasius the Second, who had been seized at the very moment of his election in the conclave of cardinals, by Cencio Frangipani, a potent and factious baron, dragged by his hair along the ground, and bound with an iron chain in the house of his tyrant. A few years afterwards, the hill became crowded with monks; for about 1130 or 1134, the antipope, Anaclet the Second, granted to the monastery of Araceli, "the whole Capitoline mount, with its houses, crypts, cells, courts, gardens, trees, fruit-bearing and not, with the portico of the *cancellaria*, with the ground before the monastery, which is called 'the place of the Weekly Market,' with the walls, stones, and columns, and everything generally appertaining to it." This document is remarkable, as affording us the latest evidence of the existence of the "Hundred Steps" of the Tarpeian Rock, or at least of a site still generally known by that name; for it mentions them in describing the limits of the grant.

The middle of the twelfth century is a memorable period in the history of the Capitol, as well as of Rome itself. The seditions of the people against the popes were then at their height; and Lucius the Second, as he ascended in battle array to the assault of the Capitol, was struck on the temple by a stone, and expired in a few days. An impassioned enthusiast, the celebrated Arnold of Brescia, exhorted the Romans to revive the glory of their ancestors, and to restore the laws and magistrates of their ancient republic; a new constitution was hastily framed, and from the year 1144, the re-establishment of the senate is dated, "as a glorious era in the acts of the city." One of the earliest fruits of this revolution was the renovation of the Capitol. "The temples of Jupiter and his kindred deities had crumbled into dust; their place was supplied by monasteries and houses; and the solid walls, the long and shelving porticos, were decayed or ruined by the lapse of time. It was the first act of the Romans,—an act of freedom,—to restore the strength, though not the beauty, of the Capitol, to fortify the seat of their arms and counsels; and as often as they ascended the hill, the coldest minds must have glowed with the remembrance of their ancestors." Henceforward the Capitol became an important station. The bell of the great tower was the signal of alarm, and was thought to watch over the new liberties of the Romans. "The tolling is often heard in the night of those unhappy ages."

Two hundred years after the Capitol had been restored, it shone conspicuous in the annals of the times, from its connexion with Petrarch and Rienzi. The Capitoline games of the emperor Domitian, in which poets were crowned with a garland of oak-leaves, had long since fallen into disuse; but there existed already, among the academical honours of the age, a royal degree of doctor in the art of poetry. From his earliest youth, Petrarch had aspired to the poetic crown; and in his thirty-seventh year he was solicited to accept the object of his wishes, receiving invitations on the same day from the senate of Rome, and the university of Paris. He preferred the summons of the former; and on Easter-day, in the year 1341, the ceremony of his coronation was performed in the Capitol by his friend and patron, the supreme magistrate of the republic. Twelve patrician youths were arranged in scarlet; six representatives of the most illustrious families, in green robes, with garlands of flowers, accompanied the procession; in the midst of the princes and nobles, the senator, count of Anguillara, a kinsman of the Colonna, assumed his throne, and at the voice of an herald, Petrarch arose. After discoursing on a text of Virgil, and thrice repeating his vows for the prosperity of Rome, he knelt before the throne, and received from the senator a laurel crown with a more precious declaration, "This is the reward of merit." The people shouted, "Long life to the Capitol and the Poet!" A sonnet in praise of Rome was accepted as the effusion of genius and gratitude; and after the whole procession

had visited the Vatican, the wreath was suspended before the shrine of St. Peter. In the act of diploma which was presented to Petrarch, the title and prerogatives of poet-laureate are revived in the Capitol, after the lapse of thirteen hundred years; and he receives the perpetual privilege of wearing, at his choice, a crown of laurel, ivy, or myrtle, of assuming the poetic habit, and of teaching, disputing, interpreting, and composing, in all places whatsoever, and on all subjects of literature.

Six years after the coronation of Petrarch, Rienzi accomplished that remarkable revolution which forms one of the most romantic episodes in the page of history. The powers of his eloquence had for some time been employed to influence the passions of the people; he had descended with zeal upon the glories of their ancient republic, and in comparing their present debasement with the greatness of their ancestors, he had roused their minds to a keen sense of the miseries of servitude. The Capitol witnessed his first triumph; to this hill he bent his steps when, on the appointed morning of May the 20th, 1347, he issued bare-headed, but in complete armour, from the church of St. Angelo, encompassed by the hundred citizens with whom he had secretly concerted his plans. The people had been warned to assemble on the previous evening, to provide for the re-establishment of the "good estate,"—his favourite expression; and an innumerable crowd accompanied the procession, as it slowly rolled forwards from the castle of St. Angelo to the Capitol. Rienzi ascended, without opposition, the citadel of the republic; harangued the people from the balcony; and received the most flattering confirmations of his acts and laws. "The nobles, as if destitute of arms and counsels, beheld in silent consternation this strange revolution; and the moment had been prudently chosen, when Stephen Colonna, the most formidable of their body, was absent from the city. On the first rumour, he returned to his palace, affected to despise this plebeian tumult, and declared to the messenger of Rienzi, that at his leisure he would cast the madman from the windows of the Capitol. The great bell instantly rang an alarm; and so rapid was the tide, so urgent was the danger, that Colonna escaped with precipitation to the suburb of St. Lorenzo; from thence, after a moment's refreshment, he continued the same speedy career till he had reached in safety his castle of Palestrina, lamenting his own imprudence, which had not trampled the spark of this mighty conflagration. A general and peremptory order was issued from the Capitol to all the nobles, that they should peaceably retire to their estates; they obeyed, and their departure secured the tranquillity of the free and obedient citizens of Rome."

As the Capitol had witnessed the rise of Rienzi, so it was the scene of his downfall. Intoxicated by the suddenness and height of his elevation, the new "tribune" was unequal to the task he had begun; and in less than seven months his folly and intemperance had dissipated the enthusiasm of the people, and provoked the open hostility of the barons and the pope*. A bull of excommunication was issued against him; and in the service of the church, a private adventurer, with a handful of soldiers, introduced himself into Rome, and barricaded a quarter of the city. From the first alarm, the bell of the Capitol incessantly tolled; but, instead of repairing to the well-known sound, the people were silent and inactive. Rienzi withdrew to the castle of St. Angelo, deplored their ingratitude with sighs and tears; he was left above a month unmolested in that fortress, and then peaceably withdrew from the city. In an exile of seven years he became reconciled with the pope, and was sent back to Rome with the title of senator; but the lessons of adversity had not weakened his vices, and after a second administration of four months, Rienzi was massacred in a tumult fomented by the Roman barons, on the 8th of October, 1354. "In his death, as in his life, the hero and the coward were strangely mingled. When the Capitol was invested by a furious multitude, when he was basely deserted by his civil and military servants, the intrepid senator, waving his banner of liberty, presented himself on the balcony, addressed his eloquence to the various passions of the Romans, and laboured to persuade them, that in the same cause himself or the republic must either stand or fall. His oration was interrupted by a volley of imprecations and stones; and after an arrow had

* The papal court was then at Avignon, where it was fixed for seventy years, from 1306 to 1376. Thus the coronation of Petrarch, and the revolution of Rienzi, occurred towards the middle of that interval of non-residence.

transpierced his head, he sunk into abject despair, and fled weeping to the inner chambers, from whence he was let down by a sheet before the windows of the prison. Desitute of aid or hope, he was besieged till the evening: the doors of the Capitol were destroyed with axes and fire; and while the senator attempted to escape in a plebeian habit, he was discovered, and dragged to the platform of the palace, the fatal scene of his judgments and executions. A whole hour, without voice or motion, he stood amidst the multitude half-naked, and half-dead; their rage was hushed into curiosity and wonder; the last feelings of reverence and compassion yet struggled in his favour; and they might have prevailed, if a bold assassin had not plunged a dagger in his breast. He fell senseless with the first stroke; the impotent revenge of his enemies inflicted a thousand wounds; and the senator's body was abandoned to the dogs and to the flames."

Fifty years after Rienzi's fall, the Capitol seems again to have lost all appearance of a fortress. Of its condition in the middle of the fifteenth century, we have the following sketch from the pen of a Roman writer, who, after describing its ancient glories, exclaims: "But now, besides the brick house built for the use of the senator and his assessors by Boniface the Ninth, itself raised upon ruins, and such as an old Roman citizen of moderate fortune would have despised,—besides the church of Araceli belonging to the brothers of the blessed Francis, constructed upon the foundation of the temple of the Feretrian Jupiter,—there is nothing to be seen on this Capitoline or Tarpeian mount, once adorned with so many noble edifices." To this period, also, must be referred the melancholy picture which the Florentine Poggio has left us of the scene which he beheld when he sat himself down with a friend "among the very ruins of the Tarpeian citadel, behind the huge marble threshold of the gate of some temple, (as he supposed,) with broken columns on all sides around him." He introduces it into an elegant lecture "On the Variety of Fortune," and applies it with a happy effect to the illustration of his subject, by recurring to the picture of Virgil, and—

The changes from that hour, when he from Troy
Went up the Tiber.

"This Tarpeian rock was then a savage and solitary thicket: in the time of the poet it was crowned with the golden roofs of a temple; the temple is overthrown, the gold has been pillaged, the wheel of fortune has accomplished her revolution, and the sacred ground is again disfigured with thorns and brambles. The hill of the Capitol on which we sit, was formerly the head of the Roman Empire, the citadel of the earth, the terror of kings; illustrated by the footsteps of so many triumphs, enriched with the spoils and tributes of so many nations. This spectacle of the world, how is it fallen! how changed! how defaced! The path of victory is obliterated by vines, and the benches of the senators are concealed by a dunghill."

Into these pictures of desolation must be introduced the cottages which served as shops to the artisans who frequented the Wednesday market which was held in the Capitol till transferred, in 1477, to the *Piazza Navona*,—an open place in the heart of the more thickly-inhabited district of the *Campus Martius*, still preserving the form of the ancient *Circus Agonalis*, whose site it occupies, and whose name, indeed, is still to be traced in the modern appellation of *Navona*, or *Nagona*, as it used to be written.

THE MODERN CAPITOL.

"RUIN and restoration," says Sir John Hobhouse, "have entirely effaced every vestige of the 'domicile of all the gods.' The greatest uncertainty hangs over this hill. On which side stood the Capitol—on which the temple of the Capitol—and did the temple stand in the citadel? Read everything that has been written on the topography of a spot 400 yards in length and 200 in breadth, and you will know nothing. Four temples, fifteen chapels, three altars, the great rock, a fortress, a library, an athenaeum, an area covered with statues, the enrolment office, all these are to be arranged in the above space; and of these the last only can be with precision assigned to the double row of vaults corroded with salt, where the inscription of Catulus was discovered."

The present state of the Capitol dates from the pontificate of Paul the Third, who occupied the papal chair from 1534 till 1550; the English reader will mark the period more readily by recollecting that he was the Pope who excommunicated king Henry the Eighth. His predecessors had

established an absolute dominion over the city; the strong castle of St. Angelo was to be the only fortress, and it was resolved to render the ancient citadel not only accessible but inviting. The genius of Michel Angelo was employed to accomplish this object; and, in admiring his successful efforts, a spectator may remark how little they accord with his own preconceptions of the Roman Capitol. The area has been partially levelled, but the principal eminence is, in all probability, as high as that of the ancient summit; the latter was ascended by the "Hundred Steps," which could hardly rise to a greater height than the 124 steps now leading to the former. The whole surface of the hill still preserves the general characteristics of its ancient figure; the two summits which formed the northern and southern ends may be distinguished at the present day, with the little plain of the *Intermontium* occupying a lower level between them. To this ancient name of *Intermontium* has succeeded the modern appellation of *Campidoglio*, which is supposed to be a corruption of *Capitolium*; the open place called the *Piazza del Campidoglio*, with the buildings on three sides of it, and the flight of steps leading up to it from the *Campus Martius*, may be considered as occupying the whole of this plain, though it is difficult to say where the plain ends, and the two summits on either side begin to rise. The northern of these summits is remarkable for the church and monastery of *Araceli*; the southern contains the *Caffarelli* Palace, and a mass of houses among which the supposed Tarpeian Rock may be discovered. We shall speak of these three divisions of the hill singly.

As in ancient times there were three ascents to the Capitol, so now also are there three; but they have changed their positions, and as the city itself has moved from the eastern side of the hill to the western, so have they moved likewise. Thus, instead of having three ascents upon the eastern and none upon the western side, it has now two ascents upon the western and only one upon the eastern. The western side, so long as it continued to be the *back* of the Capitol, had no ascents; but having now become the *front* of the Capitol, it retains but one. Of this solitary eastern ascent we have given a partial view in a former engraving of the Forum (see p. 33 of the present volume); it may be seen leading up by the side of the Senatorial Palace. There is, indeed, a passage running up from the Forum by the other side of the Palace, beyond the limits of that engraving to the left; but we can hardly call it a regular artificial ascent.

The two western ascents both start from the same point, at about the middle of the turn of the hill; a little open space has been formed there, into which the street called *Via di Araceli*, leads at once from the very heart of modern Rome. One of them runs up directly into the *Piazza*, or into the little plain between the two summits of the hill; the other slants off to the left, and runs up by 124 marble steps to the church of *Araceli* upon the northern summit. The former is more especially the ascent to the modern Capitol; we gave a view of it in former number. In the same view the line of the latter ascent may also be observed in the distance; it leads only to the church of *Araceli*. The stranger who enters Rome on the Florence side—the most common approach—has to pass through nearly the heart of the modern city before he can reach the Capitol; one of the principal streets—the *Strada del Corso*, runs straight from the *Porta del Popolo*, or ancient Flaminian Gate, to within a short distance of the northern summit. "After walking along the Corso," says Mr. Woods, "and keeping in his eye the confused pile of buildings at the end, which he is told cover a part of the Capitoline Hill, he is lost in a labyrinth of narrow dirty streets. At length, if he is fortunate enough to take the right direction, he will find himself in a small square at the foot of two lofty flights of steps."

THE TARPEIAN ROCK.

THE southern summit of the Capitoline hill possesses no remains of any ancient edifice, but it is pretty well covered with the *Caffarelli* Palace, and other modern buildings. It is remarkable, however, for its Tarpeian precipice, down which state-criminals were hurled in former times. "A lofty and precipitous mass rises up," says an ancient writer, "rugged with many rocks, which either bruise the body to death, or hurry it down still more violently. The points projecting from the sides, and the gloomy prospect of its vast height, are truly horrid. This place is chosen in particular, that the criminals may not

require to be thrown down more than once." The same author tells us, that "it would be terrific even to those who looked down it in safety."

Like the modern Tiber, the modern Tarpeian is unable to bear the weight of its ancient reputation; and it is regularly visited with the sneers or the abuse of travellers, because it fails to realize the formidable conceptions which their classical recollections have engendered. Mr. Mathews, after alluding to the description which we have quoted from Seneca, says, "There is absolutely nothing at all of all this—the only precipice that remains, is one of about thirty feet from the point of a wall, where you might leap down on the dung-mixen in the fold below, without any fear of broken bones." Bishop Burnet, who expected to find a death-place worthy of a Roman, expresses his disappointment in the remark, that "the Tarpeian Rock is now so small, that a man would think it no great matter, for his diversion, to leap over it." We are not aware that the experiment has ever been tried; perhaps the Tarpeian might still prove entitled to some share of its ancient reputation, if the attempt were fairly made, in the old style. It is evident, however, from what Seneca says, that a fall was fatal, not merely on account of the height of the precipice, but because the body was battered on its rugged rocky side. Yet the height itself has been considerably reduced by various causes; the soil at the foot of the rock has been greatly raised by the accumulation of ruins and rubbish, the rock itself has been sloped down, and houses have been built against it. We know, moreover, that a large piece of it, "as big as a house of ample magnitude," fell down in the middle of the fifteenth century.

It happens unfortunately, that as the Capitoline hill presents two angles to the south, it presents, likewise, two precipices; and it is quite uncertain which of these two we must take to be the veritable Tarpeian rock:—

The promontory whence the traitor's leap
Cured all ambition.

One of them is the more abrupt, and the other the more lofty. The latter belongs to a part of the summit, called the *Monte Casino*, which is almost choked up with paltry cottages. "We were led into a narrow and dirty court-yard," says Simond, "preceded and followed by a crowd of beggars, treading barefooted in all sorts of filth, and closing round wherever we stopped. The rock, a reddish and soft tufa, is hollowed into a spacious cave, occupied as a wine-cellars. The perpendicular front may be four-and-twenty feet high; and the abrupt slope above, on the summit of which the *Palazzo Caffarelli* stands, seems to be about as much more." The greatest height of this precipice, according to actual admeasurement, is eighty Roman palms, or rather more than fifty-eight and a half English feet; of course this includes the slope as well as the perpendicular part, but the whole rise is such as to deserve the epithet of abrupt. If we add twenty feet,—a moderate estimate,—for the depth of the soil accumulated at the base, we shall have a very respectable precipice.

THE Engraving below gives a view of the Tarpeian rock in its present state. That in p. 201, represents the Pantheon, the most perfect of the remains of ancient Rome, we shall describe it particularly hereafter.



THE TARPEIAN ROCK.